

## Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 02325 212043Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 2325

FOR EUR/RPM;INR/DDR/RSE;EUR/SOV

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, XH  
SUBJECT: NATO EXPERTS REPORT ON TRENDS IN THE SOVIET  
UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE

REF: USNATO A-192

1. WE HAVE SENT BY REPAIR THE TEXT OF THE NATO  
EXPERTS REPORT ON TRENDS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND  
EASTERN EUROPE, WHICH THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL  
WILL CONSIDER ON MAY 4. OUR SUGGESTED TALKING  
POINTS FOLLOW BELOW. THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO  
CONSIDER ADDING FURTHER SUBSTANTIVE TALKING POINTS  
ON SUCH ISSUES AS SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE NEW  
GOVERNMENT IN INDIA.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: COMMENT ON THE SUGGESTED  
TALKING POINTS AND THE EXPERTS REPORT BY COB  
MAY 3, 1977.

3. BEGIN TEXT OF SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS:

-- THE REPORT IS A GOOD REVIEW OF RECENT  
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PAGE 02 NATO 02325 212043Z

DEVELOPMENTS IN AN AREA OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO  
THE ALLIANCE, AND IS A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO OUR  
CONTINUING SEARCH FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF  
THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE  
DECISION-MAKING IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET  
UNION.

-- THE EXPERTS MET TOO SOON AFTER THE ELECTIONS  
IN INDIA TO ALLOW ANY DEEP ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT  
OF THOSE ELECTIONS ON SOVIET RELATIONS WITH

INDIA, BUT UNDOUBTEDLY WILL TREAT THAT ASPECT OF  
SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY WHEN THEY MEET IN THE FALL.

-- ON THE WHOLE, THE REPORT SEEMS CAUTIOUS.  
IT EMPHASIZES THE WEAKNESSES OF THE SOVIET  
SYSTEM -- ITS AGING LEADERSHIP, ITS LACK OF  
DYNAMISM, AND ITS INEFFICIENT BUREAUCRATIC AND  
ECONOMIC SYSTEM -- WITHOUT MENTIONING SOVIET  
STRENGTHS, OR ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF SOVIET  
WEKNESSES ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE USSR'S  
POLICIES AND CAPABILITIES. FOR EXAMPLE: FIRST,  
THE REPORT NOTES THAT THE SOVIETS ARE IN A POOR  
POSITION GLOBALLY -- EXCEPT IN AFRICA -- BUT DOES  
NOT GENERALIZE ABOUT THE RESULTING EFFECTS ON  
SOVIET POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. SECOND, THE REPORT  
DOES NOT SEE ANY BRIGHT SPOTS IN THE SOVIET ECONOMY  
-- EXCEPT THE RECORD 1976 HARVEST -- AND MENTIONS  
THAT THE POOR PERFORMANCE IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR WILL  
HAVE TO BE OF GROWING IMPORTANCE TO SOVIET  
POLICY; YET THE EXPERTS APPARENTLY SHIED AWAY  
FROM EXPLORING THE POSSIBLE EFFECT OF THE USSR'S  
ECONOMIC WEAKNESS ON SOVIET INTEREST IN DETENTE  
AND ARMS CONTROL.PEREZ

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